

franciscan

SOCIETY OF SAINT FRANCIS Volume 25 Number 1 January 2013 £2.50



"Nice to see you by" Sergiy Shkanov

Facets of faith: the gospel in modern and contemporary art

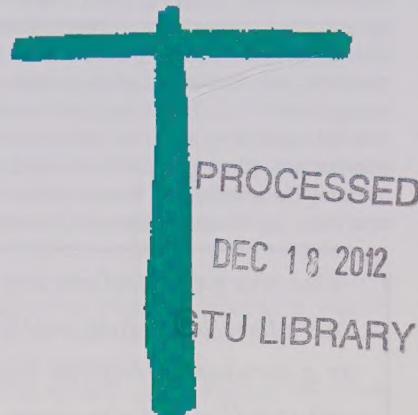
Jonathan Evens



The gospel in art has had many different facets from the fourth century to the present, over which time period an intimate linkage between the visual arts and Christianity has been forged and sustained.

This linkage formed initially through inculcation, as Christians appropriated symbols and images from Roman culture which enabled them to express and explore faith in Christ. It continued by way of icons, striking visual images that through prayer and adoration open a gateway for the light and grace of God. The permission granted through Christ's incarnation to depict the divine in human form developed in the West in the direction of realism which then competed with the grandeur of the baroque for the patronage of the church. The baroque increasingly won the ecclesiastical kudos but realism outgrew the church and became the dominant Western style culminating in the pathos of Rembrandt's privately commissioned biblical and secular images.

Throughout, content had ruled for the church as art had illustrated biblical narratives and the lives of the saints for teaching the faith, inspiring praxis,



The gospel in art

The proclamation of the Christian faith has been most prolific, if not always most effective, through the spoken and written word. In this edition our gaze and consideration are drawn to the visual. Artists, too, seek to engage, provoke and inspire us to prayer, faith and discipleship. The creative process itself can be an outworking of the gospel. Is there a hidden artist in all of us?



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and facilitating prayer. By the time Impressionism initiated modern art, art had already freed itself in many ways from the patronage of the Church and, as form not content was its primary focus, the developments of modern art led to an increasingly strained relationship between the Church and the visual arts.

Modern art developed initially by means of movements studying each element of construction separately - Henri Matisse characterised these, from his own practice, as drawing, colour, value and composition. This experimentation moved initially in the direction of abstraction (through pioneers such as Wassily Kandinsky and Kasimir Malevich) and then, by means of Marcel Duchamp's

The story of modern art has often been told solely as a secular narrative but that telling of the story ignores the influence of spirituality more generally, and Christianity in particular, on its development.

ready mades, recognised that anything can be art (including ideas, in the case of conceptual art). This focus on form raised significant issues for the Church in relating to modern art movements, which at one extreme could be perceived as contentless while, at another, could appropriate traditional Christian iconography for their own purposes. As a result, we have seen condemnation of specific artworks perceived to be blasphemous, continued commissioning of styles viewed as traditional, and an apparent general decline in church commissions.

The story of modern art has therefore often been told solely as a secular narrative but that telling of the story ignores the influence of spirituality more generally, and Christianity in particular, on its development. Roman Catholic artists played prominent roles in Post-Impressionism, the Nabis, Fauvism and Cubism. Jacques Maritain's Art and Scholasticism and the Thomistic Study Circles, which met at his home, influenced many artists. Expressionist artists frequently painted biblical narratives while Futurism developed a strong strand of sacred art. Abstraction was viewed by many as the best means available to artists for depicting an unseen realm. Suprematism and Abstract Expressionism were both influenced by the underlying principle of icons. Dominican friars and Anglican clergy alike called for the great artists and architects of their day to design and decorate their churches. A revival of traditional icon painting

occurred with centres in Greece, Russia, Europe and Scandinavia. Visionary artists abounded within Folk Art while many mainstream visionary artists also used Christian themes and imagery. In response to the growth of Christian art on the Asian continent, the Asian Christian Art Association was founded in 1978 to encourage the visual arts in Asian churches. Australia encouraged contemporary religious art through the establishment of the Blake Prize in 1951. Polish Art in the 1980s was marked by a profound interest in the whole question of the sacred in art and many exhibitions were held in Roman Catholic churches. There has also been extensive use of Christian imagery by BritArt artists with such iconography and narrative often used as a frame for the artists' critiques of contemporary life, including politics and culture.

This partial summary indicates some of the diverse means by which artists have expressed or engaged with aspects of the gospel in modern and contemporary art. To explore what some of these approaches look like in practice, I would like to end by highlighting work from artists with whom I work in commission4mission, an arts organisation encouraging churches to commission contemporary art.

Henri Matisse, in describing his work for the Chapelle du Rosaire in Venice, wrote that 'simple colours can affect the innermost feelings' and this remains a motivation for many abstract artists. Caroline Richardson uses the processes of fusing, bonding and sandblasting glass to create abstract designs in architectural settings. Her Love design, one of a series based on the fruits of the Spirit, contrasts complementary blues with yellow in sequences of ripples emanating from a small but central red heart. Love is felt here as waves of peaceful yet vibrant colour lapping over us.

Sergiy Shkanov also works in glass but uses representational motifs within abstract designs. In *Nice to see you* (on front cover) the four open hands create a circle of welcome into which we are invited. This is a piece which plays in the spaces between the predominantly sacred style of stained glass, the popular catchphrase of the title, and his bright, inviting colours suggest a warmth of welcome. Are these the hands of God or those of our neighbour? We don't know. They could be either or both simultaneously, perhaps depending on context. Whatever, we feel we are welcome. Image, colour and design combine to draw us into a space and a moment in which welcome can be received and felt.



Ally Clarke has created several installations which can be recreated on request in churches and other spaces. From a tangled chaos of broken branches a fragile wooden ladder is formed and rises into the air within which paper aeroplanes, inscribed with the hopes of participants, soar. Agony of Hope, devised in collaboration with Heather Gani, creates a visual environment prompting reflection on the fragility and

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The pot, the goat, the bed and the tree: transforming fear and pain through art therapy

Elaine Wisdom



The word gospel means 'good news' and a word often associated with the gospel is 'salvation', which translates as *healing*. We don't use the word 'salve' so much now, but it is an old word for healing - *ointment*. Another word, 'redeemed', means *freed*. These aspects are also in the remit of both therapy and therapeutic care. We are told in the Gospel of St John that Jesus "bent down and started writing on the ground with his finger". Making marks on a surface with fingers or other tool is an ancient activity. Humans have been mark-making since earliest times. At Creswell Crags in Derbyshire, images are scratched into the rock caves providing shelter for these pre-ice-age people living there 12,000 years ago. We don't know why these marks were made, but some of those early, scratched images can still be recognised today.

And recognition seems to be something that making marks helps us to do, both recognising, acknowledging and perhaps putting parameters on the world as experienced; the same need today as it was for those ice-age ancestors of ours. It is an activity that can be immensely helpful, especially in addressing trauma, loss, conflict, crisis, pain - that which has wounded us in life. Today, the act of creating an image in a chosen medium, using the imagination as both an aid and antidote to memory, is called art therapy. We are creative because we are human.

Music, art, dance, all things that children instinctively find absorbing and necessary to well-being are the same for adults' well-being too: re-finding the joy, ability and perhaps above all, permission to make a mess.

We use art therapy as part of a healing process of psychological and emotional wounds inflicted on us throughout life by a variety of causes. Art therapy is a way of recognising beyond words, and Jesus, in the gospel event mentioned above had no words, especially not the words of accusation that the crowd wanted to hear. Instead, he made marks on the ground, and when he did speak, it was to use words that made the crowd baying for 'justice' recognise what they were really about; and they dropped their stones.

Art therapy works partly by reaching the places that words cannot reach. Images that emerge from the psyche can be an expression of something that once happened, which causes us to live in a

certain way because there seems little choice. In the art room at Holy Rood House, we work in ways that may at first appear to be rather random and abstract. We work fast, on large sheets of paper, without the use of conventional paint brushes or crayons, using ready-made 'tools' that come to hand: toothbrushes, lollipop sticks, old plastic cards. This is because for many who come, holding a conventional painting brush can cause a barrier to creativity as artistic stereotypes of 'good art' come into play: What do I draw? How can I draw it? It will look a mess because I can't draw. The process used - designed to help people free up, relax, even have fun with the painting activity - provides quite a direct route for many to areas of the mind and heart that are often kept split off and apart from daily life. However, the coping mechanism used until now is no longer helpful, hence the appeal for therapeutic intervention. The aim expressed by many is to find themselves again, or perhaps for the first time. We are back to recognition. To gain, regain, freedom, choice, perhaps life itself. Precisely the reasons why Jesus came and the Gospels were written.

Creative activity is often likened to our creator God; a holistic connectivity that we at times seem to have lost. Music, art, dance, all things that children instinctively find absorbing and necessary to well-being are the same for adults' well-being too: re-finding the joy, ability and perhaps above all, permission to make a mess. Artistic excellence is not the point. To begin a process of exploration in a safe space is. The safe space of the art room is an integral ingredient, giving a safety that allows one to feel unsafe as the journey progresses. Sometimes what is made in the art room can present a possible new, or different, reality, or tell a story about oneself, experiences, hopes, dreams. The life of the imagination is a powerful dynamic, akin to the life of the

spirit, a freedom untrammelled by convention or taste: simply a relationship with colour, texture, shape and mark-making.

Print-making also has a therapeutic dimension and can work as metaphor as all creative activity can; the mark we make on life, the marks life makes on us, shaping us as artists shape their material so that the image can emerge. Michaelangelo said of his sculpted pieces that he did not impose anything but simply revealed the figure within the block of marble. This indicates a sensitive rapport with the material, seeing its potential and possibilities. Similarly, Jesus encouraged and empowered those around him to become the best they could be, and there are many examples in the Gospels; Zacchaeus, who took the actively imaginative step of climbing a tree in order to see Jesus and had his life transformed as a result.

Images made in art therapy often help the maker to see more clearly, thereby enabling change. But it takes courage to make that first, adventurous step and allow the imagination to play its part. The use of creativity, imagination and imagery can encourage freedom from constraints which limit life and its expectations, enabling a wider vision and a broader portfolio of possibilities. Connecting with one's creative process can enhance this, by, as Picasso put it, making the invisible visible. The images formed help words to be articulated, a realisation emerging through the image and the making of it that can put form on past or present terrors and dilemmas that allow fear and doubt to be the predominant dynamic in a life diminished in its expectations and responses.

Paint, because it flows, can be seen as a paradigm of the psyche. Sometimes it is only possible to manage pouring the paint from the tube before feelings become too much. The struggle to contain and control the chaos, pain and

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Elaine Wisdom is an art therapist working at Holy Rood House, a Christian Therapeutic and Pastoral Care Centre in North Yorkshire.

Father Andrew the artist: Plaistow friar, who never lost his boyhood enthusiasm for all things artistic

Steven Saxby



It is well known that Father Andrew - one of the three founders of the Society of the Divine Compassion (SDC), the first Anglican society of male Franciscans - was a popular religious writer. From 1920 onwards, he authored nearly 40 works of plays, poetry and

devotional writings. It is less well known that Andrew was a painter and creator of some inspiring works of art. Father Andrew's published works are now all gathered together and accessible at Lambeth Palace Library, but his paintings, some gracing the walls of Society of St Francis houses and possibly elsewhere, are at risk of being lost to posterity.

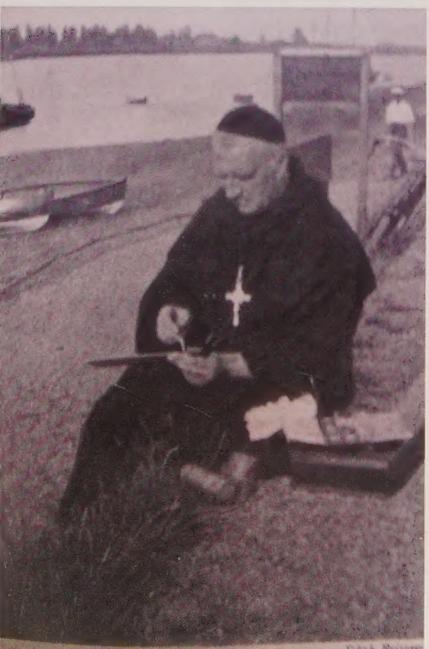
Andrew (born Henry Ernest Hardy, in 1869) enjoyed art as a child and even went to art college in Bristol before going up to Keble College Oxford. After university, Andrew spent a year at Oxford

House in Bethnal Green. That year changed his life. It was then he met James Adderley and made plans with him and Henry Chappel to form a religious community. The religious brothers set up a community in Plaistow in 1894 and Andrew lived there for most of the rest of his life, until his death in 1946. Through all this time he retained his love of art. While in Bethnal Green he started making trips to Epping Forest where he would sketch. Interestingly, Kathleen Burne's collection of *The Life and Letters of Father Andrew* contains three images of Andrew as an artist at various stages of his life: a painting by Henry Stacey of the newly habited Andrew seated at an easel; a photograph of Andrew sketching at Maldon, Essex in the late 1920s; and another photograph of Andrew sketching in Epping Forest in about 1935.

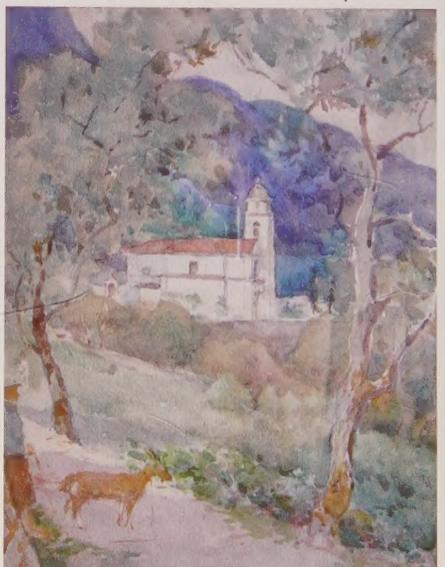
Clearly, he loved to sketch and paint. He writes, between the wars, of taking breaks in France and Italy just for this purpose. He used his artistic skills from his early days in the SDC to beautify St Philip's Church. He provided illustrations for at least one book and often provided



As a novice, 1890's



At Maldon, c. 1929



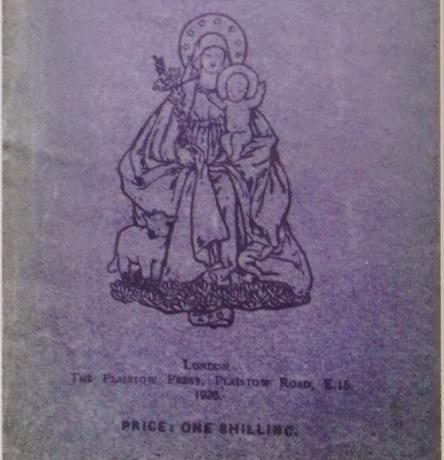
*Caudebec, France, painted while on holiday some time between the wars.
(Now in Alnmouth Friary.)*

drawings for the St Philip's Plaistow magazine and the annual parish Christmas card. In addition, he helped create artistic tableaux - scenes involving parishioners dressing-up - to present Bible stories. These were very popular and were staged not only in Plaistow but many other places too. Later he developed a number of friendships with people in the theatre, not least with Lillian Baylis, the head of the Old Vic. She had attended an SDC retreat and Andrew became her spiritual director. It was Russell Thorndike, a famous actor of the time, who persuaded Andrew to try his hand at playwriting, asking for a nativity play. So it was that in 1920 he wrote *Hope of the World* which ran for two seasons at the Old Vic and was performed to packed audiences in Canning Town Public Hall thereafter for many years. He wrote at least six plays between 1920 and 1933. His Easter play *The Garden* was performed in Plaistow every Lent from 1924 to 1941 with overflowing audiences. *The Bethlehem Tableaux*, which had lapsed for a while, were revived in 1931 and put on every year until 1940.

The Hope of the World

A Nativity Play

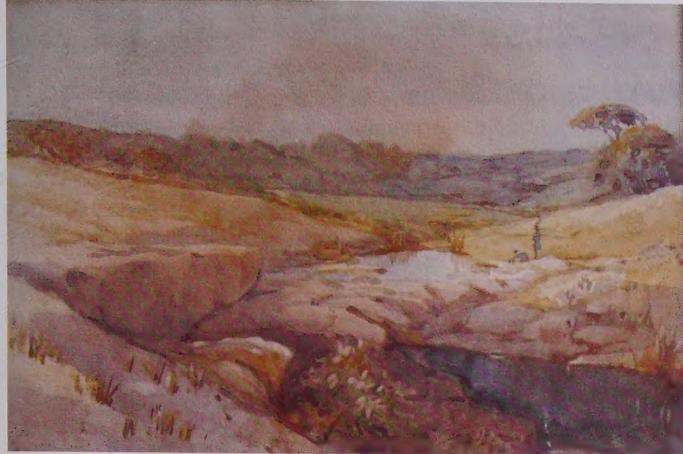
By FATHER ANDREW, S.D.C.



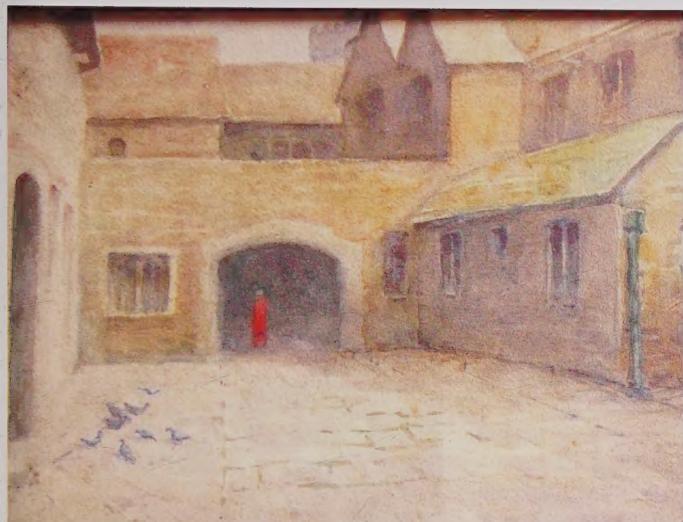
LONDON
THE PLAISTOW PRESS, PLAISTOW ROAD, E.16.
1931.

PRICE: ONE SHILLING.

Several of Andrew's books contain frontispiece illustrations 'by the Author' such as "The Manger" in his 1936 book of poems entitled *Value* and his powerful "Love's Proof" in *The Patch of Blue*. These works, as well as the paintings on the walls of some of the SSF houses, indicate that Andrew drew and painted in a simple, yet highly engaging style. There is a typically Franciscan appreciation of both nature and human beings in his creations. His beautiful landscapes often depict an elegant human figure in the distance. The frontispiece for his poetry collection *The Divine Compassion* shows Mary kneeling in front of a brick arched window. Her graceful figure is highlighted by the uneven cracks in the brick arch, including a crack with weeds growing out of it. On the base of the window, on a



*Probably painted while in Rhodesia for a year, 1932
(Now in the Canterbury Friary.)*



*Hampton Court, 16 December, 1943
(Now in the Canterbury Friary.)*

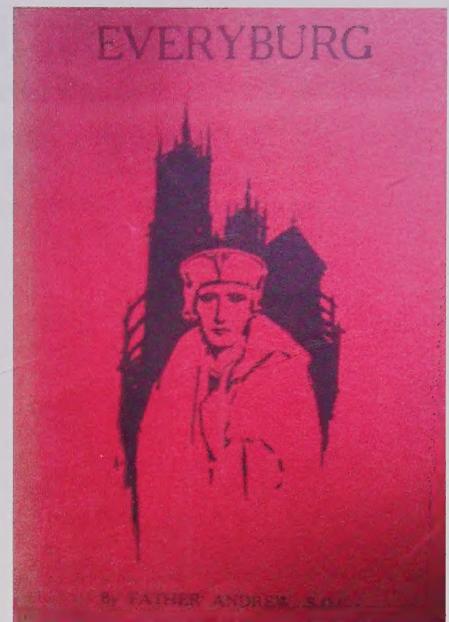
stone slab, almost altar-like, lies a tiny baby with a simple halo of light above. One can sense the loving sorrow but trusting acceptance of the young mother Mary, contemplating the sacrifice of her son for the broken world with which he came to share the divine compassion.

As mentioned earlier, part of Andrew's artistic achievement can now be viewed in the books at Lambeth Palace Library,

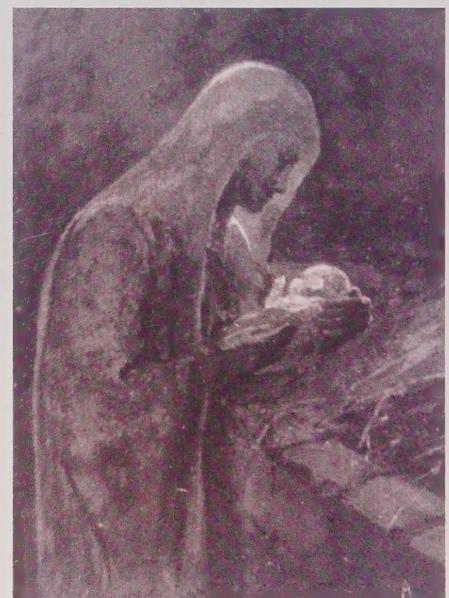
significant contribution to the spiritual health of a busy friar who nevertheless did much to inspire others in their faith. *f*

The photographs of Father Andrew are from The Life and Letters of Father Andrew S.D.C. edited and compiled by Kathleen E. Burne, published by Mowbray, London, 1948.

but what of the rest of his drawings and paintings? Having made some enquiries, it seems that various SSF brothers remember paintings that no longer seem to be around. There still are at least two paintings at Canterbury, also two at Glasshampton and three at Alnmouth, but it appears that there are no longer any at Plaistow. Are there more at other houses or elsewhere? If so, what might be done to try and save this important part of Andrew's legacy for future generations? One thing is for sure, Andrew's love of art is a good reminder to all busy people of the need to take time out and pursue those things which nourish the soul. We can be confident that his fondness for taking time out to create art, made a very



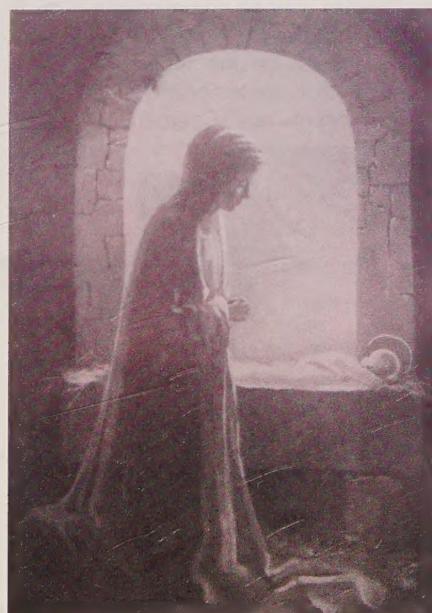
*The cover of another play
by Father Andrew.*



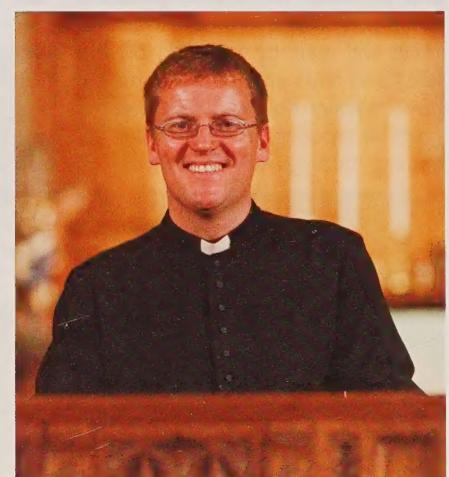
Value, 1936



The Manger, 1936



The Divine Compassion, 1930



Steven Saxby is an Anglican Priest serving in Walthamstow. He was born in Plaistow and has lived at the SDC/SSF house there, 42 Balaam Street. For a copy of Father Andrew - a summary of his life, please contact the author via stevensaxby@btinternet.com.



Re-imagining the Gospels

Helen Gheorghiu Gould

The gospels, their characters and stories, and of course the unique person of Jesus Christ, have been captured by innumerable artists over the centuries.

From the images of the Madonna and Child that St Luke is said to have made, to the stone-carvings of The Last Supper in the musty catacombs of Rome, and the glorious gilded icons of Byzantium; from the Florentine masters of the Enlightenment, to Titian, Rembrandt, Salvador Dali and Mark Cazalet, artists have re-imagined the people, the places and the scenes of the gospels and created new meanings and interpretations to fit their time.

And, of course, that is the job of artists, says Rowena Loverance: 'to make meaning visual, so that they themselves can be seen as metaphors for humanity's task of making meaning from life.' Through this process, artists become co-creators, translating the good news into a new (albeit visual) vernacular, as much as did William Tyndale and Miles Coverdale.

But how does an artist go about approaching this task? Capturing the person of Jesus and his life, death and resurrection is simultaneously inspiring and daunting and yet seems to present an endless challenge. I talked to three very different contemporary artists about how this process works for them.

Henry Shelton

Henry Shelton originally trained as a draughtsman in London, and worked mainly as a commercial artist and designer, until fully committing himself to being a painter in later years. In his youth, he was inspired by the images at his church and also by the pictures of Rembrandt in Amsterdam, and while he painted on Christian themes, landscapes and portraits, he found increasingly his focus was drawn to the gospels.

'He will start by focusing on the bible texts and finds images will come to him. I have always believed that painting is a spiritual process. I feel it is like the Spirit coming through to the canvas,' Shelton

explains. Each piece begins a process through which he will become 'fixated' by his own admission, and when he reaches a point when he can do no more with the piece, 'it leaves me and I'm onto the next one.'

Shelton's style has become increasingly minimalist over the years as he tries to pare down and draw the viewer into his images. One image consists of a chalice, wafer and crown of thorns, with the words 'Do This' inscribed next to it. Shelton watched with delight, at an exhibition in Westminster Methodist Hall, as a father and his two children became increasingly fascinated by the image. 'What does "Do This" mean, Dad?' one of the children enquired, and this allowed Shelton to step in with some commentary on The Last Supper.

'I want people to look harder at my work, so that it engages them,' explains Shelton. 'If you intrigue people they get more from it ... I get enormous pleasure out of drawing the viewer into my work, so that they try to work out what it means.'

Shelton has now produced three sets of Stations of the Cross, one of which featured in a one-man show at York Minster, and has completed several commissions for churches in East London.

'I feel privileged to be part of a great lineage as a Christian artist. But I do also feel a great sense of responsibility, not to trivialise the gospel but to translate the profoundness of it,' concludes Shelton.

More on Henry Shelton at <http://commissionformission.blogspot.co.uk/>

Peter Webb

Peter Webb is a Fine Artist and former art teacher, whose commissions include paintings of the Supper at Emmaus, and The Betrayal, on the theme of Peter's denial, both in contemporary settings.

'The gospels are a tremendous set of stories - especially

The Passion. They are written very graphically, as is the whole of the Bible,' comments Webb. 'What inspires me is the desire to help tell these stories. People constantly need reminding of them. Or they just don't know the stories. When I was doing the Supper at Emmaus I met at a party a very brainy Oxford undergraduate, reading English, who asked me what I was currently working on, and when I told him he said he'd never heard of the supper at Emmaus!'

Webb's process begins with reading the text and imagining it, in period and modern dress, in various settings and in various lighting conditions. 'I am one of those painters who allows, or needs, a very long gestation period for a major new work - sometimes several weeks, sometimes months or even years. Wherever possible, I work from life, so the life I'm working from will influence or modify my mentally generated ideas.'

'I try to stop when it works as a composition, arrangement of colours, shapes, tones which accords more or less with my mental projection. But as to the picture's success as a piece of religious art, involving interpretation and theology, I leave that to my critics.' More on Peter Webb at <http://commissionformission.blogspot.co.uk/>



Peter Webb's Supper at Emmaus and The Betrayal

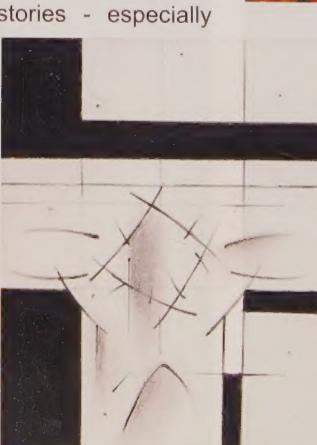


Mark Dean

Mark Dean is part of the young generation of contemporary British artists, whose work has included reimagining the gospels using multi-media. A lecturer at Goldsmiths College at the University of London, Dean weaves together film and music clips to create art installations. He won the 2009 Paul Hamlyn Award for Artists. Mark is also a Church of England priest.

In terms of the process, always starting with the Evangelists, Dean is working with 'appropriated' film and music

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Images from Henry Shelton's Stations of the Cross: Veronica wipes the face of Jesus; Jesus speaks to the daughters of Jerusalem; Jesus dies on the cross.

Minister's Letter

Brother Clark Berge, Minister General of the First Order Brothers, writes:

Dear Friends,

This past year has seen big changes in C/SSF. Most of the provinces have new ministers, and with them comes a burst of new ideas. I find it exciting. Of course they are building on the firm foundation of their predecessors. With a sense of gratitude we move forward.

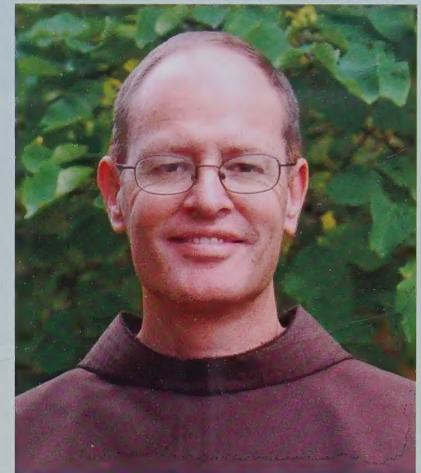
A friend of mine, Michael Lapsley of the Society of Sacred Mission, has recently published a book called *Redeeming the Past: My Journey from Freedom Fighter to Healer*. He has a remarkable story that challenges the reader on many levels. One of the things that stands out for me is the clear decision he made to work to create the kind of world he wanted to live in. From his first encounters with apartheid to the day of the bombing that took his hands and eye, and then to the founding of the Institute for Healing Memories, Fr. Michael took responsibility to create a just world. In the end this has meant rejecting hatred and bitterness and being open to listen to and to help people who suffer from violence and oppression all over the world. I celebrate his ministry and wonder if I am big-hearted enough to do the same.

Thank God we do not all live in circumstances where we fear bombings (though, who knows?). But we do all live in circumstances where our Franciscan commitments as brothers, sisters, Tertiaries,

Companions/Associates and subscribers to this magazine are clearly needed. Ordering our lives according to our Franciscan values is a way to unleash creative, healing power in every corner of the world.

Political rhetoric can be fierce. The election campaigns in America are at fever pitch as I write. Casting votes is important and a great privilege. But somehow we must duck under the radar of polls and party affiliation and help the people who need to be helped, build friendly working relationships with neighbours and local officials. I think we are ideally suited as Franciscans to really make a difference because our usual way of working is with individuals. Franciscans have a genius for friendship and significant symbolic gestures. Like blessing animals: the annual spate of pet blessings at Francistide is a perfect example of the way to start a conversation about what we believe with people who have taken the trouble to seek us out.

But I don't think we need to be afraid of politics either. Sometimes our friendships draw us into local struggles for justice that are worthy of our vulnerability and commitment. When I lived on Long Island I became friendly with and involved with the migrant day labourers. Talk about getting involved in a heated debate! The local county executive characterized us Franciscans as the 'lunatic religious



fringe,' a description that went right to the heart of the memory of local townspeople shouting 'Pazzo! Pazzo! (crazy fool!)' after St. Francis. But it was innumerable shared meals, giving rides and accompaniment to meetings and interviews that forged the commitment. When I was installed as Minister General we celebrated with a huge Mexican meal prepared by my friends involved in this struggle.

Sitting down with outcasts and the poor is a good first step to creating the world we want to live in. Jesus did it, Francis did it. Knowing them as our brothers and sisters we can join their struggles with hearts full of love.

I wish you much peace and all good in all your work to make the world a better place.

Clark S.S.F.

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materials, so the meaning is not always his own. But, in the selection of these materials, Dean can often feel connections arising which offer new insights into the gospels. 'Lately, I have started out making works for some other reason, and then noticed and developed an explicitly gospel significance at some point in the process of making it,' he says.

One project specifically tackling a gospel theme was Scorpio Rising 2, which was screened most recently at St Philip's Church, Salford, in October 2012. It is a reflection on the Gospel of Matthew, pairing Italian filmmaker Pasolini's black and white film of the gospel with the angry rawness of a 1960s American biker film. In his commentary on the work, Dean notes: 'Throughout the work there were many moments when the gospel itself seemed to be being translated at some level in the language of the work, up to the ending, when (in the lower screen) the stone falls away from the tomb to

Theme Prayer



**O God, whom saints and angels delight to worship in heaven:
be ever present with your servants who seek through art
to perfect the praises offered by your people on earth;
and grant to them even now glimpses of your beauty,
and make them worthy at length to behold it unveiled
for evermore;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

(Book of Common Prayer - Episcopal Church of the United States of America)

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St Matthew's House in Leicester has had a long history, always at the heart of its neighbourhood. Starting life as The Talbot Pub, it survived slum clearance in the 1950s and, later, became a parish centre surrounded on three sides by blocks of maisonettes (1). It is now home, downstairs, to a local charity working with young people and, upstairs, to Sisters Beverley, Chris James and Jenny Tee. The beer cellar lives on as the Parish Chapel!

Here, we live out our shared life as a Christian praying presence in an inner city estate, an area with a rich diversity of faiths and cultures. We hope that these pictures will give you a glimpse into our life in Leicester.

People ask us what we do....

(2) Asphalt and brick surrounds at the approach to the house are shamed by the flowers and vegetables which Chris James's 'green fingers' produce. (3) We don't have any garden with real earth but our pots and grow bags provide a colourful balcony, strawberries by the front door and plenty of tomatoes, beans, courgettes etc for the kitchen - weather permitting.

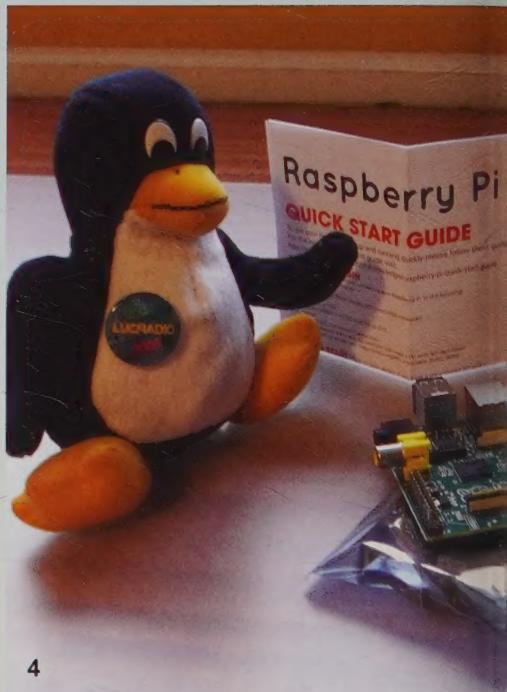
(4) Not only is she SSF's Computer Advisor, Chris James also builds computers and helps with computer classes at the Tenants' Association.

(5) Beverley was ordained priest at Leicester Cathedral by Bishop Tim Stevens on 30th June 2012, and presided at her first Eucharist the next day at St Peter's Church Highfields, with members of the parish, C/SSF Brothers and Sisters and friends present. She continues to juggle time in the parish as an NSM curate, undertaking Initial Ministerial Education and commitments within the Community. The photograph shows her ready to take her first wedding ceremony.

(6 & 7) At the annual Parks Day on St Matthew's Estate, we hosted a tea tent for the over 55s who live around us. The quieter space to sit and to talk was much appreciated, so were the tea and home-made scones!

(8) We feel very much part of the life of the Diocese here. At the re-opening of Launde Abbey, we were invited to speak about our life in St Matthew's. Courtesy of a camera on a bike basket, we were able to give a virtual tour of the estate as the backdrop to our talk. (9) Leicester life is multi-cultural and multi-faith. Chris James works part-time at St Philip's Centre for Study and Engagement in a Multi-Faith Society. Beverley and Jenny Tee recently explored 'Friendship Through Art' with others in the Muslim Christian Women's Dialogue Group. Closer to home, we've made good friends at the Somali café next door.

(10) We're neither church bell-ringers nor athletes, but we and our liturgical bells made it to join in the national "All the Bells" at ten past eight in the morning in the city centre, ringing in the 2012 Olympics and Paralympics.



4

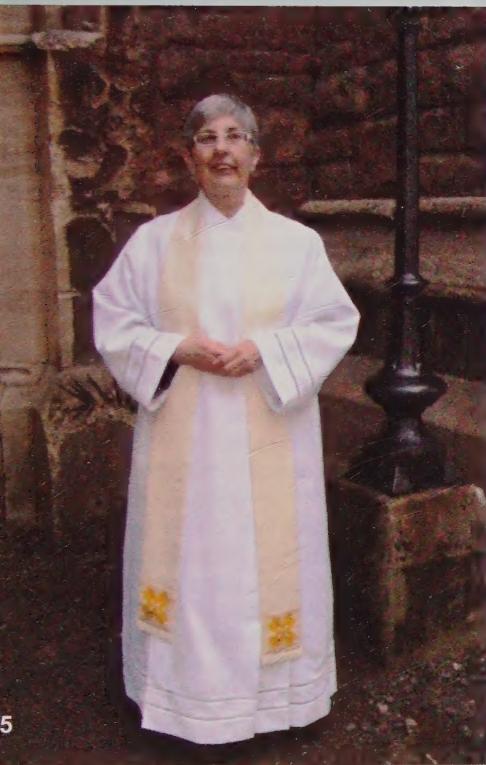


Leicester

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10

Community Routes



Ronald with David Jardine and Benedict.

◆◆ Brother Ronald makes a century

Since the Society of St. Francis was founded it has produced many remarkable people. Amongst those is Brother **Ronald**, who has been a member of the Society for over seventy years. So it was absolutely right that on Saturday, 18th August, 2012 his 100th birthday should be a real celebration of a life well lived for God. The Three Towns Nursing Home in Stevenston, near Saltcoats in Ayrshire, where Ronald has lived for a number of years, helped to make it a wonderful occasion. The afternoon began with a short service of Holy Communion in Ronald's room, a beautiful little service with **Benedict, David Jardine** and some friends present. Then after some community singing in the common room the Deputy Lord Lieutenant and the Provost arrived to present Ronald with his telegram from the Queen.

Ronald is now profoundly deaf and almost completely blind, but in spite of that he seemed to be aware of the significance of the occasion. Benedict and David Jardine both had a chance to speak, and thanksgiving was offered for Ronald's

years in SSF, his long-standing contribution to industrial chaplaincy and his years teaching at Adelaide College in Saltcoats.

Because of his disabilities and difficulty in communication Ronald spends most of his time in his room. But that does not mean his work for God has ended. He has never lost his lovely nature and that speaks volumes to the staff. Some of the women who work there said that Ronald is the most peaceful person in the Home, testimony to the fact that his faith and spirit are still very much alive.

◆◆ Hilfield's rooftops

Rooftops have featured significantly at Hilfield in 2012. In February - March, 26 solar PV panels were added to the existing 18, covering most of the St Francis' chapel roof. Overall, over 10% of the total friary electricity used is now solar. Visitors to the friary are encouraged to look at the meter giving all the figures, including how much CO₂ is avoided. SSF were thankful to several very generous donors and for the installer, Heavers of Bridport, who worked very hard to finish the work just in time for them to claim the higher rate of Feed in Tariff.

In his Canticle of the Creatures, St Francis wrote 'My Lord, be praised by Brother Sun, who through the skies his course does run, and shines in brilliant splendour; with brightness he does fill the day, and signifies your boundless sway' so it is great that the chapel is now a powerhouse of Brother Sun as well as of prayer. The photo shows the completed panels before the removal of the scaffolding, with community members and two of the installers.

During the spring rains, there was dismay when it was realised that the thatch roof on Bernard House had come to the end of its life. Buckets were to the fore until funds could be released to enable it to be renewed, the work for that being completed in the summer.

Ascension Day saw a different kind

of activity on the rooftop: singing! Half a dozen community members climbed onto the roof of St Francis House to sing Ascension hymns while an appreciative(?) audience watched in the courtyard below.

◆◆ We have a Facebook page!

Over the past few years a new dilemma has reared its head in Religious Life; not anything to do with 'traditional' tensions but, instead, something presented by the (relatively) new phenomena of 'social media.' That this is the case may be seen by the plethora of articles and (appropriately) websites which explore the parameters of appropriate interaction between social media and religious communities. In one such website, Gott im Web, (www.gottimweb.at) the Archdiocese of Vienna, in conjunction with the religious community at Stift Heiligenkreuz notes that '... the internet and the new social media have placed communication in a new era. In everyday interaction the new media is indispensable. The Church must take account of this: where people are the Church must be...' Whilst recognising that 'social media' is not an unmixed blessing and that it can cause one to replace 'real' friendships grounded in relationship and shared experience with ephemeral 'virtual' friendships, the website development group decided that it was time to utilise this new form of communication and to open a Facebook page on behalf of the 'European Province of the Society and Community of St Francis.' This Facebook page is accessible through our website (www.franciscans.org.uk) and on Facebook itself and will, hopefully, enhance the website and allow us to be a presence in the increasingly popular world of social media.

With the assistance of Mark Gould-Coates, our information technology consultant, the website for the First Order in the European Province has recently had

a makeover. The content remains similar, though the design has been slightly changed. The website also has an 'RSS feed' on it, informing people that something new has been added to the website. As a large proportion of people under the age of 30 no longer use a computer to access a website, but they use a mobile



device - phone, tablet, i-pad etc. - it is vital that we are accessible to such people.

◆◆ Greyfriars restored

Sue writes:

Greyfriars Chapel in Canterbury, built on the site of the first Franciscan dwelling in England in the thirteenth century, and incorporating some ancient friary buildings, was re-opened after extensive restoration work, and blessed by Bishop Trevor, Bishop in Canterbury, on 26 April, 2012



Austin, Master of Eastbridge Hospital and Guardian of Greyfriars welcomed us, and **Jonathan Carey**, of Donald Install Associates, the Architect to Eastbridge Hospital, gave a most interesting insight into the history of the building which is now Greyfriars Chapel, and its recent restoration. Peter Williams of Viridor, one of the donors, also spoke at the ceremony, which was followed by refreshments in the Eastbridge Hospital.

Those attending included **Reginald, Benedict and Sue**, local clergy, tertiaries, companions and friends, and Roman Catholic friars and others from the Franciscan Study Centre.

Austin thanked all those who had contributed financially to the Restoration Fund: - Franciscans from around the world, including SSF, OFM, and TSSF, Viridor, Colyer Ferguson Trust, Friends of Kent Churches, The Don Beerling Trust, The Tory Family Trust and many individuals.

◆◆ The wettest Greenbelt yet?

As the summer continued and the drought conditions were replaced by records for rainfall, the thought of camping at Cheltenham racecourse for the annual Greenbelt Festival became a bit disheartening. However, commitments for input into the Festival were in place, and there would be opportunities for renewing friendships as well as enjoying the special atmosphere of Greenbelt which is not weather-dependent, so the Franciscan team was at full strength when the August bank holiday weekend got under way. The ground was remarkably dry under foot until the deluge on Saturday afternoon, which left large puddles of water, or mud, in some areas, temporarily disabled the electrical supply to G-Source where the Third Order had a stand, and generally made 'wellies' essential footwear for the rest of the weekend. Our tents were made of sturdy stuff, and withstood all that the weather threw at them (a hailstorm, and winds, too) so we were thankful to remain dry, and to be able to offer assistance to a couple of other folk whose tents were less weather-proof.

The two Morning Prayer worship sessions which we led in Soul Space, in the dry at the top of the grandstand, were packed out with about 150 people. **Helen Julian** and **Hugh** spoke to an attentive audience on Monday afternoon, in a venue which hosted a variety of speakers on Christian approaches to ecology; their



Barnabas Francis and Vaughan lead Morning Prayer at the Greenbelt Festival.



The Benedictine community at Mucknell, in Worcestershire, visited the friars at Glasshampton in the summer. An informal peer grouping seemed to happen at teatime! Br. Anthony chatted with Anselm and Br. Luke and Sr. Sally chatted with Christopher Martin.

Hilfield Friary 2013

Saturday 9 February
Pre-Lent Quiet Day

★
Saturday 23 February
Snowdrop Day

★
16-20 March

Young and Contemplative Retreat

★
23-31 March

Holy Week and Easter (places limited)

★
11 & 12 May

NGS Open Garden at the friary

★
Saturday 14 September

Stigmata Festival

★

For further information and for other weekend and day events, see www.hilfieldfriary.org.uk

For bookings:

The Friary of St Francis, Hilfield, Dorchester DT2 7BE

Tel 01300 341 741

hilfieldssf@franciscans.org.uk

title was 'Brother Sun, Sister Moon and Cousin CO₂'. Abbott Stuart OSB from Mucknell Abbey also spoke in that venue, so it was a good witness to efforts that religious orders are making with regard to managing their buildings in ways that are more caring of our environment.

◆◆ Round up

Thomas Anthony has moved to the friary at Alnmouth. The SSF flat in Assisi is being staffed by members of the Third Order, who are also maintaining the chaplaincy for the Anglican congregation at St. Leonard's Church.

Helen Julian has begun training for ordination at Ripon College Cuddesdon. **Catherine Iona** has withdrawn from the novitiate.

In the European Province of the Third Order SSF, elections have resulted in new officers for many of the Areas, and **Averil Swanton** was elected Minister Provincial TSSF. **John Reynolds**, who is also a member of the community at Hilfield, was elected Provincial Treasurer. f

Audio franciscan

Elizabeth Dixon, TSSF Provincial Disability Advisor will arrange for you to have an Audio CD version of *franciscan* and Intercessions if you have a visual impairment. Or if you know of anyone who needs the *franciscan* in this format please contact her:

2 Swan Court, Banbury Road,
Stratford upon Avon CV37 7HG,
Tel: 01789 263141 or
med2swan@btinternet.com

Continued from page 2

substance of our hopes, dreams, ambitions and aims. Beauty from brokenness, hope from despair, as the hymn writer puts it, but visualised in this contemplative yet inspiring space.

What is the gospel? What is art? In our time many answers can be given. Some church historians would argue it has always been thus. To encounter the gospel in contemporary art, this diversity must be embraced. The traditional forms of expressing the gospel in art - illustrating biblical narratives and the lives of the saints - remain, albeit sometimes in the newer form of movements like Expressionism, while attraction and reaction to the meaning, impacts and influences of the gospel also continue to inspire creative work by contemporary artists working in fields such as the abstract, conceptual, performance and relational arts.

A recent installation by Josiah McElheny at the Whitechapel Gallery (*The Past Was A Mirage I Had Left Far Behind*) transformed the Gallery into a kaleidoscopic hall of mirrors with seven large-scale mirrored sculptures arranged as multiple reflective screens onto which reconfigured abstract films were projected. To embrace the diversity of ways in which the gospel is expressed and questioned, explored and critiqued, in and through contemporary art is to see ourselves and our faith reflected in just such a myriad of mirrored facets. f

commission4mission: <http://commissionformission.blogspot.co.uk/>

Ally Clarke: <http://www.no-ordinary-day.com/index.htm>

Caroline Richardson: <http://www.itsoriginal.co.uk/glass/about.htm>

Sergiy Shkanov: http://www.londonart.co.uk/sales/cv.asp?artist_id=6092



Jonathan Evens is a Vicar in East London and the secretary of commission4mission, an arts organisation encouraging churches to commission contemporary art, while also creating his own visual and written work.

Continued from page 3

fear of a life become moribund is sometimes seen and felt all too painfully in the pouring paint, so we stop there until next time when the painting and the making of marks in the paint, interacting with it, becomes more of a possibility. In some subliminal way, this activity works upon the inner constraints and fears, allowing the possibility of some kind of inner movement to be recognised, integrated and allowed to happen over time; allowing new possibilities of a different kind of life. We see this sort of release into greater freedom many times in the Gospels, where lives are taken up and begun to be lived more fully; taking up our beds and walking, where before paralysis had seemed the only option.

*The life of the imagination
is a powerful dynamic,
akin to the life of the spirit,
a freedom untrammelled
by convention or taste:
simply a relationship with
colour, texture, shape
and mark-making.*

Whatever is made becomes a third element in the conversation taking place between client and therapist, and can 'speak' as much to the art therapist as to its creator. The image and process can help draw together those bits of life that have been shut away, split off and buried as too shameful or terrifying. The object made may also carry 'stuff' that is no longer needed or wanted. In this sense, it reflects the Jewish scape-goat sent into the wilderness. To integrate whatever has happened to us in life gives choices. As Jung said, the shadow self is 90% gold when worked with and integrated, creating and allowing a wholeness which is both healing and freeing.

As Jeremiah discovered when he went down to the potter's house, (Jer 18:3-4) 'So I went down to the potter's house; there he was, working at the wheel. But the vessel he was making came out wrong, as may happen with clay when a potter is at work. So he began again...', art, dance, music, singing, can all make a profound contribution to living life more fully and sometimes to beginning again. Anything that will allow a re-imagining of life's potential, and an actively embodied, creative way of making it more possible for ourselves and others echoes Jesus' definition of his ministry in John's Gospel: 'I have come so that they may have life and have it to the full.' f

Elaine thanks Lis Leigh, Jan Younger and Jonny Wooldridge for help and technical support.

Continued from page 7

reveal the resurrection, while (in the upper screen) a door ... bursts open, following a killing. I have subsequently found that whilst some viewers can see these kinds of correspondences, others do not, and that this differential does not seem to entirely depend on their level of familiarity with the Bible. For my part, the work has

The gospel can only make sense when it is related to our own lives, and my life is mediated through art to a large extent.

remained one way in which I relate to the gospel. The gospel can only make sense when it is related to our own lives, and my life is mediated through art to a large extent.'

Trying to represent the gospels is, he admits: 'Impossible, but I've found there is no way round it. In that sense it is not so different from trying to live the gospel - in fact, that's what it is, but in terms of being an artist.' f



Installation view of Mark Dean's Scorpio Rising 2 (The Gospel According to St Matthew / Hells Angels on Wheels) in The Church of the Holy Trinity & St Mary, Berwick-upon-Tweed, 2007

More on Mark Dean's work at the artist's own site: <http://tailbiter.com>.



Helen Gheorghiu Gould is a priest, currently serving as assistant curate in Epping District Team Ministry.

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(published three times a year)

The significant increase in UK postage rates that took effect in April 2012 has meant that we have had to put up subscriptions from January 2013. In addition to the rates below, we will trial an e-version for those outside the UK, at £8 per year.

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Reviews

Michael Lapsley with Stephen Karakashian

Redeeming the Past: My Journey from Freedom Fighter to Healer

ISBN: 9781 5707 5992 5

Orbis Books, NY, 2012, £16.99

In this book Michael Lapsley tells his story about his life. He is a brother with the Society of the Sacred Mission. As a young priest he was sent from Australia to South Africa with the Society. Encountering the horrific oppression of black people there, he underwent a profound conversion. He committed his life as a brother and priest to fighting apartheid.

His love and compassion for the oppressed people of South Africa led him to join the ANC. He describes his decision to embrace the struggle, including a deeply felt choice to support the armed struggle after watching many hundreds of his friends and colleagues suffer violence and death. But he never succumbed to hate. In the hospital, wounded by a letter bomb that blew off both his hands and an eye, he chose a path of healing and forgiveness. He has worked with people from both sides of the South African struggle, and stands publicly committed to forgive the ones who hurt him should they claim responsibility and ask for his forgiveness. To date nobody has claimed responsibility; he believes it was sent by the South African government.

Fr. Lapsley's experience led him to recognize there are many people around the globe who suffer from debilitating experiences and are haunted by memories of hatred, pain and violence. Meeting with these people he developed a simple, gospel approach to healing that includes storytelling - listening and being heard. He founded the Institute for Healing Memories, and now travels the world listening to people and helping them to heal. He trains others in this work. Healing, hope, and forgiveness are his life's work. This book raised for me the stark question: how much am I willing to forgive others and let go of my pain and grievances?

I highly recommend this book.

Clark Berge SSF

J. Denny Weaver,

***The Non-Violent Atonement* (2nd ed)**

ISBN: 9780 8028 6437 6

Eerdmans, Michigan, 2011, 325 pp,
£16.99 (Also available for Kindle)

This is a tremendous book in more senses than one: quite apart from its length it is intense and concentrated. Though not a book for the faint-hearted, it is more than worthy of its second edition and expansion; offering, as it does, an alternative to St Anselm's Satisfaction Theory and stating a totally new and much needed understanding of

atonement - seen here from a standpoint quite different from his. No-one with an interest in and desire to understand atonement theory should be put off.

The author, J. Denny Weaver, calls it 'a relatively small book', but it contains, as he says, more than twenty-five years of thought and dialogue; and as such presents a substantial and readable offering of distilled scholarship.

Criminal justice systems in the developed world have as their basic premise the substitution theory predicated by St. Anselm - having the aim of making the severity of punishment balance the heinousness of the crime. Thus, until recent times, in the western world hanging or the electric chair were considered appropriate punishment for murder.

We are used, in our day, to the understanding that events, expectations, even our own ideas and thoughts arise in their particular context; generalisations often do not fit, so what was judged right in the time of Anselm of Canterbury is not necessarily right for us ten centuries later. In his book, Weaver shows how black, feminist and womanist theologies have contributed to fresh perspectives on the atonement; making a substantial contribution to any relevant debate.

Elizabeth CSF

Timothy Radcliffe.

Take the Plunge

ISBN 9781 4411 1848 6

Bloomsbury, 298 pp. £10.99

To 'take the plunge' means: to be baptised. The subtitle of the book is 'living Baptism and Confirmation'. The author, Fr Timothy Radcliffe, was at one time the Master of the Dominican Order in the Roman Catholic Church, and he is well known both for his scholarship and his ecumenical approach.

In this book he expounds the theme of baptism and the meaning of the rite, but his scope is much wider. He teaches what it means to live the baptized life in all its fullness.

He writes very attractively, incorporating much orthodox theology, and keeping the reader's attention by including lots of stories and personal anecdotes. The story that I like best is that of Herbert McCabe who was accused by his mother of committing what may have been a mortal sin when he was six years old. He replied that this was impossible because he had not yet reached the age of reason.

Fr Timothy points out that most religions use water, and that the story of creation in Genesis links the origins of life with the springing up of water. He endorses the teaching of St. John Chrysostom, who said that in baptism we are publicly enrolled as God's friends.

In the teaching on confirmation there is a plea that we should take the study of Christian doctrine more seriously. There is mention of a university student surrounded by learned books on various

subjects, but whose only book on theology was 'a book of cartoons fit for a ten year old'.

This is an enjoyable book and is very easy to read. But it is also full of challenges, which makes it all the more profitable.

Martin SSF

James Woodward, Paula Gooder & Mark Pryce

***Journeying with Luke
Lectionary Year C***

ISBN: 9780 2810 5902 7

SPCK, London, 2012, 102 pp, £9.99

The second in a series of three books by this group of authors, designed to assist reflection on the Sunday lectionary (*Journeying with Mark* having been published in 2011), it is described in the introduction as 'a short resource for Christians so that the Gospel narrative might be explained, illuminated and interpreted for discipleship and service'. The background information about Luke, why he might have written the gospel, and discussion on the key characteristics of it, are given in the Introduction. Six chapters then give insights into the readings for Year C in each of the main seasons of the church's year, not as a detailed commentary but with a sense of the critical elements in Luke's telling of the story. The final two chapters select a couple of Sunday readings in Ordinary time, as examples of how the text might be worked with.

Each chapter has four parts: a section 'exploring the text', which gives some information on Luke's narrative and connects it with the season; 'imagining the text' which is a poem or piece of imaginative writing from the perspective of a character in the gospel, or a modern-day re-working of the story; 'reflecting on the text', which makes more connections with our life today; and finally some suggestions for 'action, conversation, questions, prayer' prompt personal connections between faith and experience. The book encourages the reader to be faithful to Luke's text and also to be faith-full, using the material provided as a model to do one's own work on the rest of the Sundays of the year. The book will be a valuable resource for preachers, home group leaders and those who want to be more engaged with the Sunday sermon.

Maureen CSF

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Wilfrid SSF

From the sermon preached at his funeral by Damian SSF

Brother Wilfrid has been a significant part of SSF for nearly 70 years. I was two when Fred Simpson (that's Wilfrid's secular name) was made an oblate by Father Algy in 1943 at the age of 27. Fred was born the second child of Robert and Emma in Ramsgreave near Blackburn in Lancashire, growing up on Stoops Farm with his elder sister, Marion. His mother died tragically when he was only eleven, and in the same year Fred contracted meningitis which robbed him of his sight. He has been registered blind ever since, with only very limited sight, just shadows and a little vision out of the corner of one eye.

The loss of his mother brought ill consequences to his Dad, his sister taking over the running of house and farm, and to Fred himself. He was first sent away to a school for blind children and then to a workshop where he learnt basket making, which he hated. But he later discovered what was to become one of his life's preoccupations as a gardener, being invited by the Revd Glynn Jackson to tend his vicarage garden at St Martin's, Witton. Fr Glynn knew Fr Algy and the Franciscan connection was made. He joined the mystical line of Algy's oblates, following Ronald and Matthew and Peter. Given the name of Wilfrid, after St Wilfrid of Ripon, he was professed in the First Order by Algy in 1952. Again he met the basket industry here at Hilfield, and it must have been to his relief that he was chosen to be part of the team to begin a new friary in the North East in 1961 in the village of Alnmouth. Bliss, for there were extensive gardens and a greenhouse and clocks. He had acquired his own Braille edition of the 150 psalms, all of which he learned by heart, making it possible for him to join in the seven-fold Office, which we then recited from the Book of Common Prayer.

Of course, blindness has been a continuous trial for Wilfrid, but it seemed the community would always have novices to work with him, to be his eyes, and to really progress his horticultural ambitions and domestic needs. But his expectation of these helpers began to exceed even the sacrificial aspirations of those novices assigned to him and I fear that for many, the relationship tended to wear thin. Finally Br Edward hit on the idea of a guide dog who might provide Wilfrid with a clearer measure of independence. Enter, Sister Olga! The first in a long line of four-legged angels who became 'man's best friend' to our Brother: Olga, Tara, Uffa, Ranger, and his last, the beloved Ella who died in 2007.

But we should return to Alnmouth for some of the endearing stories about this unique Brother in SSF. In his insistence to deal only with the person at the top, he made a life-long friend of Ellis Wood, the rose grower, and the gardens slowly converted into what seemed like a whole field of roses everywhere, and one bed entirely set aside for the variety Ellis had specially cultivated and named after him,

the rose Brother Wilfrid. I see Wilfrid's fingers rubbing the leaves of different plants to smell their identity, or stooping to catch the scent. He found God most fully in the fruits of the soil as he also found God in the beauty of the round of the Coverdale psalms or the hymn sung from the *English Hymnal* (he did have a soft alto voice), for music was the other great love of his life, which yielded to his Catholic tastes.

Precision was built into his character, and clocks had grown to become his hobby, dare I say, obsession. His speaking watch had to be timed to the pips of the radio Greenwich Mean Time.

*Brother Wilfrid SSF
died on 4 October, 2012,
and his funeral Mass was
held at Hilfield Friary.
He was aged 96 years and
in the sixty-first year of his
profession in vows.*

Each evening at Alnmouth, the brothers sitting in chapel for Evening Prayer would hear from upstairs, first the pips from the radio, then the chime of the Grandfather clock at the top of the marble stairs, followed by the master's footsteps down the staircase as the clock in the chapel commenced chiming, with its sixth stroke sounding just as Wilfrid arrived at his stall in choir. Evensong could now begin.

With the passing of seasons, it was thought best that Wilfrid move in 1978 to a school in the York area with a view to combining chaplaincy with his garden talents; but to learn a whole new routine was too much to ask, so he moved again to a quite unsuitable home in York where they were not geared up to the quantity of house plants that moved in with him. Our Protector at the time, Bishop John Eastaugh, came to the rescue and made all the arrangements for Wilfrid to join the staff of the newly opened College for the Blind at Hereford, with a small flat of his own where he lived for 20 years. These provided perhaps some of the happiest times of his life, a fully working, warm greenhouse at the College, and access to the Cathedral which he attended daily for

Evensong. His colleagues at College and the devoted attention of their kitchen staff, coupled with a genuine welcome from the then Dean, Robert Willis, and the attention of the Cathedral Organist, Roy Massey gave our Brother a place to truly belong. Sadly, while at prayer in the Cathedral, his mischievous guide dog Uffa chewed up a kneeler and mistaking the medieval pew ends for a bone, gnawed away what had survived the Reformation and two world wars!

My last picture of our Brother was back at Alnmouth at the end of a disastrous morning in the garden when he bent down to pull up some offending weed. His right eye caught a protruding stake in the ground; and there he was on the step, shielding the eye, waiting to be taken to casualty, fearful of the loss of that tiny remnant speck of sight he had left.

How does any one of us know how we would follow Christ without our eyes to see, or be content to hear repeatedly the story of Jesus' restoring the sight of the blind; but not our own? Wilfrid's courage enabled him to endure many consequential hardships, sometimes admittedly with driven determination and without understanding or regard for his brothers or sisters, but nevertheless he has borne his cross and persevered to the end. For Wilfrid, God was real, and alive in the world of his acute hearing; the music of Bach and the Cathedral choirs thrilled him. God was also alive in the world of beauty in nature, and of that world which required continuous trust, those countless friendships and companions on the way that brought to him the riches of true fraternity.

This leads me to John Tasker's home in Malvern Avenue, Hull, the friend to whom we, as a Society, owe a very great deal for caring for Wilfrid, over the last eleven years of Wilfrid's life. John has been the Brother who has befriended, nursed, fed, cared for, worried over, supported, and shown infinite patience towards him. We thank him, for he has seen Wilfrid to heaven's gate and prepared him for the world to come.

So as we are gathered to commend our Brother to God's merciful and unfailing love, we give thanks for his life, his vocation, his faithfulness; we pray that in Christ he will know the fullness of life and peace at the last. Amen. f



Wilfrid SSF

Arnold SSF

Julian SSF

Thomas Arthur Nodder was born on 26th May 1920, just off the Old Kent Road, now in the shadow of The New Den, home to Millwall F.C. One of five children, Tom's two sisters died in infancy. Tom's father, Edwin, was a chocolate manufacturer's labourer but between the wars, employment being precarious, Edwin moved in and out of different work.

Not a particularly religious family, the Nodders allowed Tom to attend St. Bartholomew's Church North Camberwell, where he learned from Fr. Cuthbert Cadman and others the Christian faith, as taught by the Anglo-Catholic movement. At school, Tom showed ability in numeracy and literacy, stayed on an extra year, and so qualified to do office work in the City. As a teenager he loved to dance, and earned a reputation as a lovely mover. He had fair hair and blue eyes too.

In 1939 Tom's mum died. A few months later war was declared.

Tom - known in the Army as Arthur - joined up and trained with the Royal Signals, serving in North Africa and Italy. In later years he spoke with some fondness of 'old Jerry', and delighted to make friends with young lads from Germany living and working with the brothers in Plaistow.

After the War, the family re-gathered at Clacton-on-Sea. Tom felt an ever stronger calling to follow the path of Christian discipleship.

Back in South London, Father George Potter had founded The Brotherhood of the Holy Cross (BHC), reaching out to the young boys and men of Peckham and Nunhead, where Tom was to join the brotherhood, and become Brother Arnold,

making his profession on 4th April 1951.

Arnold received training in the religious life, and then sought permission to train for the priesthood. It was not often that a working class young man with no further education was so preferred in the Church of England. Arnold attended King's College London, while a full and active member of BHC. He was ordained on 24th September 1961 in Southwark Cathedral, and served as a curate at St. Mary's Rotherhithe.

*Brother Arnold SSF
died on 17 August, 2012,
and his funeral Mass was
held at St Philip's Church,
Plaistow.*

*He was aged 92 years and
in the sixty-second year of
his profession in vows.*



Arnold SSF

Following the death of Father George, and the ending of BHC, Brother Arnold moved to Hilfield Friary in 1963, and thence to Plaistow, to join the clergy team at St. Philip and St. James. He did not change his allegiance to West Ham United F.C.

Much valued wherever he went, and keeping contact with friends from every chapter of his life, Brother Arnold then began what was to be his distinctive work, expressive of his abiding passion. In Gillott Road, Birmingham, the SSF brothers opened a hostel for young men in trouble with the law, in which Brother Arnold was to play a pioneering and sustaining part for much of the next three decades. Working with the Probation Service, Arnold welcomed, accepted, encouraged and guided many whose previous life experience had been of rejection and abandonment. Steadfast in his commitment, homely and humorous, Arnold witnessed to the abiding love of God for the lost and forsaken, in such a way that lives were rebuilt and hope was restored.

The SSF were working also at Hooke School, where Arnold joined the staff team for a while during the 1970s. When the time came to retire from 'the front line' of working with young people, Arnold returned, not to Dorset, but to East

London. Aged 78, he became part of the Plaistow parish again, serving in the hospital chaplaincy, and delighting to share a cuppa with visitors, volunteers and friends at Helping Hands/The Friary in Balaam Street. For many, his smile said it all: a hint of mischief, a freedom from judgement, a keen understanding, a lively appreciation. Arnold's heart was ever giving, his mind ever open, his spirit embracing the next adventure and the stranger at the door.

As much at home in cloth cap as Franciscan habit, laughing uproariously at the TV programme *Blind Date*, a keen student of church and social history, whistling Gilbert and Sullivan arias while ironing at midnight, Arnie (as he became to all of us in Plaistow) entered into old age, failing capacity, and illness with extraordinary graciousness and gentle courage. For over six months he suffered a measure of torment, physical, emotional, psychological and spiritual, dying from severe dementia and heart failure, at St. Joseph's Hospice, Hackney, on 17th August.

In the darkness, Brother Arnold's soul continued in radiance and the presence of God, to the end a faithful soldier and servant of the Lord. At his funeral, many friends gave thanks for a brother who had made God's love and goodness real for them. f

franciscan

is published by the European Province of the First Order of the Society of Saint Francis, a Religious Order in the Anglican Communion. The Society of Saint Francis is committed to follow Christ in the way of Saint Francis of Assisi, in humility, love and joy.

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The European Province
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ISSN 0532/579X

All editorial correspondence should be addressed to:
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Printed on recycled paper by
Pensord Press Ltd, Pontllanfraith